

THE GATES OF TWILIGHT



H. E. HARMAN

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GATES
OF TWILIGHT

BY
HENRY E. HARMAN

AUTHOR OF
IN LOVE'S DOMAIN
PEACEFUL VALLEY
AT THE GATE
OF DREAMS

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DEDICATION

Who loves the sunlight on the hills,
Who feels a pain at human wrongs,
Whose soul at childhood's laughter thrills
For him I sing these simple songs.



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GATES OF TWILIGHT



"Her glory prostrate on the frosted plain."

DEATH OF SUMMER

Lo Summer dies upon the pale gray hills,
Her glory prostrate on the frosted plain:
A touch of gloom the eye of Nature fills
O'er crimson blossoms in the valley slain.

Long days we walked the roadway of content,
And listened to the lutes in whispering trees
That seemed to us from some fair Heaven sent
Upon the perfumed wings of every breeze.

When I turn back the pages of the book,
Telling the story of her loves and mine,
New gladness smiles in every wistful look
Like ruddy youth, awakened by old wine.

We knew the glory of the woodlands wild;
We knew the secret of the birds that sing;
For us the bending wheatfields swayed and smiled;
Our joy, like birds, was ever on the wing.

Our comradeship has reached its fateful end:
Alone I walk where memories of her cling;
And yet for us new skies of June will bend —
We'll meet again beyond the Gates of Spring.

DEAR VIOLETS

DEAR violets, lo! you have come again,
And how I greet and welcome you, although
Your coming brings, with joy, a sting of pain.
Dear gift of God, why do I love you so?

Ah, when she died, far in the long ago,
I well remember how upon her breast
They placed a bunch of violets; and so
Gave her to God, to dream and be at rest.

I yet recall the little bunch of blue
Was close enough to her pale cheek, and seemed
To give bright color and a ruddy hue,
As when she lived — when we together dreamed.

So when you come again, dear violets,
Somehow my throat is over-full and I
Feel all the loss, the pain and keen regrets
And sadly think of you and her; then cry.

And when I go to meet her o'er the way,
Then on the little mound which covers me
Grow there-about, dear violets, I pray,
And I shall sleep content, where'er it be.

SILENCE AND A SONG

THE moon rode high above the fields of May
Within a sky so pale,
The little stars were frightened far away
And shone as through a veil.

Night's silence hung across the meadow there;
No cricket song was heard,
Till Gladness tempted from its dreamless lair
Soft note of mocking bird.

Then symphonies of every land and clime
Swelled low and soft and sweet,
Until all notes of Music's simple rhyme
Together seemed to meet.

DAY AND NIGHT

THROUGH all the splendor of the day
Men, hand in hand, with Virtue went;
While Sin alone betook his way
With grief and discontent.

But when the lights of day went out,
And lights of night came on,
Men walked the streets with Sin about
While Virtue walked alone.



"The pictured glory of the dogwood trees."

TO THE BROWN THRUSH

AH, matchless bird! whene'er I hear you sing
Then waken dear old memories of spring.
Again the hawthorn's clustered crown of white
Swings out before me in the April light.
Adown the woodway, thru the budding leaves,
The pictured glory of the dogwood trees;
And every wind that sweeps across the plain
Brings thoughts of her again.

Ah, matchless bird! no matter where you sing
Dim memories of the olden South you bring
Within the glen, beside the lazy stream,
In royal splendor fair magnolias dream,
And jasmine hangs its yellow lamps to light
The perfumed glory of the Southern night.

Ah, matchless bird! where'er I hear your song
The phantoms of dear faces float along
The road of yesterday, and in your strain
Come echoes of forgotten years again.
A bar of song from your be-feathered throat
Sets all the past afloat,
And once again I live the halcyon days
As one who thru some mystic woodland strays!

Sing, matchless bird! And lo, the Southern skies
Bend over me and o'er my Paradise!

MILDORELLA

I

MILDORELLA is a cottage, very few know where:
Modesty is shy and timid, never mind how fair.

Mildorella has its garden, shut in by a wall:
In it every summer blossom hears the summer call.

Mocking-bird and thrush and linnet sing the whole
day long
And I, listening to these masters, live a life of song.

Blooming hawthorn scents my hedges, then the wild
rose vine;
All the blossoms of the woodland love this world of
mine.

Yoeman oak has taught me patience, willow how to
weep.
While my pine tree nightly lulls me to the land of
sleep.

II

Mildorella has above it just a touch of sky,
But it gives me worlds of sunshine as the years go by.

And my sky gets all the moonlight when the day is
gone:
Silver stars all seem to find it, watching till the dawn.

If the night be warm and sensuous, summer time or
spring,
Mocking-bird, too glad for slumber, in my hedges
sing.

And the west wind from my garden, kissing every
vine,
Soothes me with its lotus odors, like the vintaged
wine.

III

Mildorella has its woodland; through it flows a
stream,
Overhead the willows, bending, sway and weep and
dream.

Here the jasmine trails its festoon, and the smilax
vine
Decorates in green and amber cloistered church of
mine.

In this church I daily worship, mostly giving praise,
While some unseen lute above me to the stillness
plays.

IV

Mildorella is a cottage, very few know where,
But to me it is a kingdom, wonderful and fair.

Here Content and I are happy, strolling 'round all
day,
Making fellowship with blossoms that bestrew our
way.

We can whistle every bird-note that the tree-tops
hold;
We are fellows, knowing secrets, more than may be
told.

AWAKING

DAWN opens wide her gateway for the sun;
Night's shadowy deeds are done.
The herald lark sounds welcome to the day
O'er fields of scented hay.
The cavalcade of stars hide from the light,
Well conquered with the night.
Broad streaks of gold across the sky are drawn —
First messengers of dawn.

Dreams pass beyond the realm of human ken
As daylight enters in,
I wake to bless the gift of untried days
In whispered song of praise.

MYSTERIES

O MYSTERY of night when daylight sleeps
And sorrow at the grave of laughter weeps!
O mystery of silence and repose
That shadows all when weary eyelids close!
God give me faith when death shall darken all
To hear my master's call.

O mystery of love that rules the soul
And far-off heights of new desire unfold!
O mystery in touch of slender hand
That beckons to some undiscovered land!
Envelop all I am and wish to be —
Seal thou my destiny.

O mystery of death which some sad day
We all must face along the silent way!
O mystery of sleep within the tomb,
Guarded by dreams and unawaking gloom!
Call not, O Fate, while Summer fields are gay,
Wait till the fields are gray.



"Your pictured face is buried in the past."

ROSALIND

I

AH! how I yet recall the blessed day
When we together walked Love's holy way;
Strange, unseen lutes made music in the wind
Because of you, dear Rosalind.

II

The stolid years have crowded thick and fast;
Your pictured face is buried in the past,
Yet when the skies of every Springtime bend,
The lutes still play for Rosalind.

III

Ah Fate! divorce my fortunes, if you will —
Take house and lands, but this much leave me still —
That I may hear until my journey's end
The lutes that play for Rosalind.

MY PRAYER

DEAR God of light,
Before the night
Shall end this day Thou givest me,
If sore distress I chance to meet,
Or sad-faced want upon the street,
Lend me the wish to give for Thee —
To aid some sorrow in its plight.

Dear God, this day
I would obey
Thy mandate for "the least of these."
If I shall see in childhood's eye
A tear, or hear its sobbing cry,
Teach me its pain and grief to ease
And send it laughing on the way.

And this much, too,
Love loyal, true,
For fellow-man, both low and great:
To meet my duty with a smile,
To work and sing the little while,
Till day has reached the golden gate
And calls to coming night, "adieu."

THE MASTER IN THE GARDEN

I

THE crimson guilt of all the world was laid
Upon the Master's unoffending head.
Thence Sorrow him into the garden led;
With Grief and Silence in the dark he prayed.
The olive trees alone would shelter him
Within that hour so dim.

II

His faithful few, alas, were wrapp'd in sleep.
Men never court companionship with grief;
In prayer, alone, the soul must find relief;
Peace comes at last when one has learned to weep;
Thus prayed the Master, underneath the tree
In dark Gethsemane.

III

The waning stars seemed very far away;
The olive leaves beheld him as he wept,
And o'er the kneeling form close vigil kept
Until the waiting East was streaked with gray:
Then from his grief the Master, turning, said:
"Sleep on"; the East was red.



"For love had closed the door."

THE CLOSED DOOR

LOVE knocked: Youth heard and listened, but
Was busy with his gold that day;
She knocked again, the door was shut,
Then sadly turned away.

Love knocked once more in after years,
But Fame was calling up the height:
With broken heart she left in tears,
For it was almost night.

Time bore the Youth to green old age:
She gave him wealth and fame and more,
But somehow life was like a cage,
For love had closed the door.



"The Autumn glory softly passes by."

THE AUTUMN WOODS

You walked these sylvan ways when Spring was
queen,
When every tree and flowering bush was green,
When butter-cup and dear anemone
Made of the woods a heaven for you and me.

Down where the brook was busy with its song
The brown-thrush sang in joy the whole day long,
And where the plum-trees skirt the outer wood
The mock-bird made all music that he could.

You loved the Spring and so did I, and yet
When Summer came it brought us no regret,
For those who love the season's changing ways
Will find that Nature has no sluggish days.

So when the Autumn spreads her colors wide
Upon the valley and the mountain side,
The burnished woods and scarlet-painted hills,
She touches in our hearts a chord that thrills —

Thrills at the glory of the goldenrod,
And at the fields which from the swarded sod
Lift up their harvests. Ah! for you and I
The Autumn glory softly passes by.

Learn thou, who will, this lesson once for all,
That mother Nature loves you, and her call,
When once you hear it and you understand,
All seasons lead through some enchanted land.



*When night shall hush the noises of the day
And silence holds her undisputed sway,
Then blest is he, who, turning from his toil,
Feels childhood's welcome lure his homeward way.*

GATES OF TWILIGHT

CLOSE, gates of twilight; leave me with the night,
To counsel take and set my soul aright
Of errors that beguiled me in the light,

 This, e're I seek repose.

Close with the softness of an angel's tread,
Leaving without no deeds of wrong to dread,
No spoken word that I might wish unsaid;

 Dear gates of twilight, close.

BUTTERFLIES

WITHIN some ancient book I read
The story of two angels fair,
Who unto vanity so wed
Were banished to the outer air.
From Paradise they drifted slow
Through opalescent earthly skies,
And when they reached our valleys low
Were changed to golden butterflies.

So when the halcyon days of Spring
Awaken from their Winter sleep,
The gift of butterflies they bring
Old promises to keep;
And when the days of June are fair,
With bloom and bird and sunny skies,
Behold the angels flying there,
The dainty, stately butterflies.



THE FIELDS OF MAY

THE South-wind blows from some enamored plain
Where wild, sweet blossoms stayed his lagging feet,
And kissing each he brought away the stain
Of their rich colors, and a perfume sweet,
Which now he blows upon this mystic air
Where all things seem so fair.

A thousand tulips bloomed within the night
Upon the hillside there, and now look up,
Like waiting angels in the misty light:
Each lifts to God its prayer-embroidered cup,
Lo, each a priest of purity and prayer,
Each, than its mate, more fair.

Down where the fields and meadows meet, a stream
Flows underneath a canopy of trees:
The alder catkins sway and swing and dream
To melody of ever-droning bees:
The brook flows slowly, singing on its way
The praises of the May.

There overhead the lark bestirs the air
With careless wing and note so clear and true
That ploughman pauses at the picture fair,
To watch the singer, mingling with the blue.
The sunlight floods the meadow's wide retreat;
May's glory is complete.

II

I wonder if the thrush would dare to tell
The secret of a tryst two lovers kept
Within the perfumed borders of the dell,
Or if within her jasmine bower she slept
While Love confessed to timid eyes of gray
Amid the blooms of May?

I know the daisies heard the words we said;
The tulips caught her blushes, and the breeze
Went telling tales of some-one to be wed.
There was a muffled smile among the trees:
The brook went singing on its peaceful way
Of lover's tryst and May.

There is a hidden place we know not where,
A remnant of the Eden-land of old,
Whose fields and meadows all are passing fair,
Whose breath is blown upon the teeming wold
 When sky-lark sings a lover's roundelay
 Above the fields of May.

III

All melodies of man or feathered things
Well from the soul, where sweet contentment waits,
The over-flow of joy from passion's gates,
The echo of a bell which gladness rings.

Here on the up-land fields the ploughman sings
Because some tender joy is in his soul,
And then he whistles, as he turns the wold;
Deep in his heart some bell of gladness rings.

And every tree-top has its unseen choir;
From meadow-thicket comes the wood-thrush song,
The mocking-bird exults from tallest prong,
The air is charged with sound of lute and lyre.

Somehow the breath of Paradise must bend
In sympathy along its heavenward way,
Else what could make these glories of the May,
What other land such sound and sight could lend?

I pity him who sleeps a day like this
 And yet, my child, I pity him the more,
 Who all the glory of the fields should miss
 While busy with his gold and earthly store:
 Who lingers on the city's dusty street,
 Away from things so sweet.

I pity him, who from the city dim,
 Like captive, sees the distant fields of green
 And like an echo hears the sylvan hymn
 The woodland plays on rustic lutes unseen:
 Who only sees afar, but cannot share
 God's matchless glories there.

But pity more, my child, the drossy soul
 Of him who walks the blooming fields of May
 And tramples, unconcerned, the blooming wold,
 Who never hears the unseen lutes that play:
 Alas, the fields of Paradise will be
 But wastes to such as he.



*"This twilight dim, the gloom, the grate is all the
Master gave to me."*

THE MASTER, FATE

OUT of the vast
Dim-visaged past,
Out of the night that shadows me,
A world of dreams their faces cast
On silken pages, turning fast,
Which in the Book of Fate I see.

Alone I wait
And watch the grate,
For every ember glowing there
Shines with the gold of sunset skies,
Betrays the sparkle of her eyes;
The outer night is like her hair.

Somehow, to-night
The olden fright,
That chilled my soul so long ago,
Lifts its dull shadow in the light
Where her lost face, in silence, might
Appear, because I loved her so.

The Master, Fate,
Is never late,
Nor ever fails; and so you see
When she and I did watch and wait
And dream our dreams, alas, so late!
This twilight dim, the gloom, the grate,
Is all the Master gave to me.

Who walks each day
Along life's way,
With lost-love buried in his soul,
Looks far away, where vistas gray
Upon the Winter's twilight play
And feels the dagger grim and cold.

I wonder why
Spring's blossoms die?
And more than this, the mystery,
Where human souls united are,
Grim Fate should separate afar?
Grim Fate no answer gives to me.

The hand of sleep
My dreams shall keep:
I pass beyond where all is fair,
In slumber-land I'll touch her hand,
My pleading look she'll understand:
Grim Fate can never reach us there.

LOVE'S PENALTY

I

I LOOKED toward the far-off stars,
And then upon her face so white;
For she had died within the night,
And left me with these human scars.

II

And thus I cried, "O stars so white,
That shine through time's eternal flight
And fix our destinies on high
Of joy or grief, oh! tell me why
This one so near to me should die?
Why would you open wide the gate,
Through which the stealthy tread of Fate
Could pass and rob me of her there,
Now cold and speechless, but so fair?"

III

From out the Skyland's vast domain
I heard a whisper through the night:
"All things the farthest off remain —
Those closest to the heart take flight."

IV

Thus only would the stars reply.
I felt grief's dagger in my soul.
Her sweet face seemed so white and cold:
Fate laughed to see his victim cry.



*"I sinned and lo! the better self in me grew
very sad."*

I SINNED

I

I SINNED, and lo! the better self in me,
Which had been laughing with a childish glee,
Grew very sad and wept with breaking heart
And hid her face in shame's humility.

II

I sinned, and lo! the beauty of the light
Turned all to darkness, and the sudden night
Had no calm stars to cheer a broken heart,
Or lend a hope, or lead me in the right.

III

I passed a child upon the crowded street
And somehow when our glances chanced to meet
I felt a dread and turned the other way;
I could not look within a face so sweet.

IV

I sinned, and strangely every little thing
I used to love, the birds upon the wing,
The flowers, the sky and every blessed tree,
All seem to have for me a bitter sting.

LOOK BACK, O YEARS

I

Look back, O years! and slowly scan the road:
On every mile post hang some wreath of green;
Some garlands weave with pine and rue between,
Spin some of primrose where contentment glowed.

Look back, O years! and let me see once more
The fabled days when ships put out to sea;
Bring, too, the waiting ones, which told to me
The story of their loss on alien shore.

Look back, O years! Before my moistened eyes
Lift soft the picture of a wild rose lane,
And face of her who never smiles again
Beneath once soft, but now be-clouded skies.

Look back, O years, that fix our destiny!
Through light and shade the phantom shadows go:
I read the past in echoes soft and low,
And bless my fate for gift of Memory.

II

Open, O book of Time! thy scented page
And let me read the story of the years.
Be thou to me philosopher and sage:
Chide not the falling of unbidden tears.

Life's rosy morn fills one sweet chapter rare;
How long we dwell upon the sacred lines;
Her voice is tangled in the rhythm there,
Somehow her face in all the story shines.

The wild rose lane is redolent again
Of vine and bloom and all things soft and green;
Love rules unquestioned in this fair domain,
And every blossom bows to her as queen.

Here is the story of the bridge which spanned
The little brook, crossing the verdant lane
Where Love confessed in tremor of her hand
And in her cheek, where blushes left their stain.

There are the meadows, which, for all I know,
Are daisy-starred, just as when she and I
Looked out upon them in the summer glow,
And saw their beauty with one lover's eye.

And in the blue I know the pale stars shine
As true as then: while in the hedge-row near
There blooms again the trailing wild-rose vine
As when I watched its majesty with her.

III

The wild sea has her gladness and her wrath:
To some she gives the fabled wealth of kings,
Guiding their argosies o'er stormless path;
To others, lo, but shattered wrecks she brings.

My ships at sea, O Book of Time! were lost
And here the story of their wreck I see.
Alas, why read? Why should I count the cost?
No gracious wind can bring them back to me.

Yet in their building how my heart did burn;
How Hope went out across the trackless main
To undiscovered lands the prize to earn;
What gilded castles loomed in far-off Spain!

IV

You give, O Time! and yet you take away.
The wild-rose lane is sweet, but when I see
Its bloomless vines the question comes to me,
Can Winter's chill requite the warmth of May?

The ships that sailed come back, alas, no more;
They never reach the fabled land of gold.
The years pass on and waiting hearts grow old;
We know the ships are lost on alien shore.

And yet, O Time! thy recompense is sweet,
For every wild-rose brings a thought of her,
In every breeze a silent voice I hear,
In every dawn her long lost form I meet.

.

Look back, O years! and slowly scan the road,
On every mile post hang some wreath of green;
Some garlands weave with pine and rue between;
Spin some of primrose where contentment glowed.



"The brook and I go strolling by."

THE BROOK AND I

THE brook and I
Go strolling by,
Like vagabonds who loaf and play
Through all the lazy summer day:
We never try
To reason why
We always sing and never cry.

The brook and I
Love earth and sky:
The meadows, where the poppies grow
And where the busy reapers mow,
Is where we both are prone to go:
The brook is shy
And so am I;
We love alike the field and sky.

We never sigh
The brook and I:
We find the coolest spots to hide
And where we like we there abide,
And then we stroll on, side by side:
Brook blinks his eye,
Then so do I.
The world for us is fair and wide.

THE NUN

THIS cloister shade
For pious maid
Is soothing to a heart so torn,
And all the marble hallways worn
Are sacred: and the light of morn
Falls sweet where one is prone to pray,
Within the breaking of the day;
The very air is perfume laid
To saddened heart of cloister maid.

On bended knee
She reads her plea
To some fair god far, far away,
Amid the half born light of day:
For as one kneels so must one pray,
And in the dusky light of morn,
To her some sacred joy is born;
But in the dusk she cannot see
What was the burden of her plea.

Somehow to her
There was the whirr
Of that old world she used to know,
And in her woman heart the glow
Of Love, which one time thrilled her so:
Then in the dusk she seemed to see
The face of him who used to be
The wide sweet world, with all its stir,
The first and only world to her.

THE DREAM

I

THE silence of the night had soothed my sense of
pain;

The longings of the day were lost in sleep.
But sleep has dreams, wherein we live again,
And love and want the thing we cannot keep.

Fate had bereft me of the one I loved so well,
That all things else on earth seemed poor beside
My idol gone, in some far land to dwell:
Fate left me with my Grief and Dreams to hide.

II

But he, who is the guardian of our sleep,
Took me, through pity, to the jasper gates
Where long-lost faces lonely vigils keep,
That I might see her there, who for me waits.

III

Inside the gates of gold
Awaits through ages old
The smiling face of jewelled Gabrielle:
To him I whispered low
If he, perchance, might know
Where I could find, within his vast domain,
Within his wondrous heavenly plain,
The blessed one I loved so well —
Could he but tell?

And then with pity in his angel eye,
He pointed with his golden-armored hand
Across the meadows, to a wooded land,
And in soft words I scarce could understand,
 Made this reply:

IV

“ Fair mortal, whom we all adore,
Because love brings you to this shore,
 In yonder wood grow tufted, yew-like trees,
 Whose fragrance scattered by eternal breeze
 To every troubled heart gives ease.

“ Sometimes within that magic grove we find
Wan faces, to the old world yet inclined,
Who left upon your sin-encumbered shore
Some precious idol Death could not bring o’er.
They find the breeze from yonder tufted yew
Brings back the mem’ries of old loves anew.

 Fair mortal, in that grove, I am inclined
 Your long-lost maiden, weeping, you will find.”

V

Scarce spoke the radiant guardian thus, when I
Hasted across the meadow land, where grew
Each blossom I had known beneath earth’s sky,
Save thorny thistle and the bitter rue.

Within the magic wood strange perfume brewed,
Whose incense wakened every old desire
Where love had slumbered: now the way was strewed
With golden images, the soul afire.

VI

Strange figures walked amid this phantom gloom,
 Sad eyes looked wistfully at far off things;
 There was the silence of some nameless tomb,
 In every face the pity waiting brings.

VII

Upon the outer edge, where fell the light
 Of golden sunshine, in a nook of green,
 Counting the petals of a daisy white,
 The dreamy face of her I sought was seen.

And when I knelt and took her hand in mine
 And saw the welcome hasten to her eye,
 Her words to me were like the vintaged wine,
 As answering all my look, she made reply:

VIII

"The golden ways were tedious to my feet;
 The symphony of harps was incomplete:
 The meadow lands, with Asphodels of blue,
 Were weary wastes, alas, for want of you.
 In all the glory of this wide domain
 There hung the shadow of old human pain.
 Now in the touch and tremor of your hand
 The reason for it all I understand."



"A bar of song and lo! forgotten days."

THE MEMORY OF A SONG

A BAR of song and lo! forgotten days
Lift dimly through the haze
And show their wistful faces once again,
Deep scarred with awe and pain.

Beneath the symphony of whispering pines,
Festooned with jasmine vines,
We walked the hallowed roadway of delight
Into the slumberous night.

Behold, a world of splendor shone about
The tall trees, in and out!
When someone hummed a love song low and sweet
Love's glories seemed to meet.

And so to-day a bar of that old song,
Floating the street along,
Brought back her face and those forgotten days
Where wistful Memory stays.

PICKETT'S CHARGE

HOLD, Passions, hold your breath to-day!
Look, Valor, with a keener eye!
Let Fear and Dread slink far away,
For Pickett's men go riding by,
And on the field of Gettysburg
They show the world how heroes die.

Somehow a stillness fills the air,
A truce before the charge is made:
The clover fields are green and fair,
Beyond, a long defense is laid,
Against whose loaded guns of steel
Gray-coated men ride unafraid.

Ten thousand souls without a fear,
Ten thousand faces hard and grim
Who naught but Duty's call can hear
Ride from the valley's smoking brim:
Upon the farther side each saw
Death's ghostly visage 'waiting him.

Behold, another Light Brigade
Charge steady through Death's Valley deep!
Behold, an army unafraid,
Unawed, its faith in honor keep!
Look, Valor, with your wistful eyes!
See Death his crimson harvest reap.

Lo, every man who rides the height
Rides not like hireling or slave;
Each is a freeman in the fight,
Who has a far-off home to save;
His pawn a woman's welcome smile,
Or rest within a hero's grave.

Charge men, there are no cowards here!
Strike men, and let the nations see
How freemen master human fear,
And shame the arm of Destiny!
Your household idols watch to-day;
To glory's court you hold the key.

The deed is done; Death reaped to-day,
Like harvester with blade of steel.
See where the smoke has cleared away
War's nameless crimes of blood reveal;
And broken hearts begin to bleed
The tardy years can never heal.

Somewhere the hand of Time will write
Men's bravest deeds on page of gold;
Somewhere an angel pure and white
Will call, aloud, a heroes' roll;
Somewhere the deed of Pickett's men
Fame's star-set banner will unfold.



"Both storm and cloud have left the main."

THE GUILTY SEA

THE night approaches and the sea-storms break :

In under-tones

The ocean groans,

And bids her furies all awake.

Even the light of night's pale stars,

With aid of mist and cloud she bars.

Alas, good ship, that rides the troubled deep,

Old ocean plans

With storm-washed hands

To send thee to thy last long sleep.

With clouds and night, with wind and wave

She'll put thee in thy sailor grave.

But see, when daylight 'wakens once again,

How soft the breeze,

How calm the seas!

Both storm and cloud have left the main;

Once more her calms brood far and wide

As if her guilt she wished to hide.



*"Who kneels upon the cold, gray floor, penance to do
for all his sin."*

A SONG OF CHEER

I

WHO kneels upon the cold, gray floor
Penance to do for all his sin
Has yet to find the nearer door
Through which the dear Christ enters in.
Not marble halls, nor cloistered walls,
Nor incense from the lamps that burn
Can free the soul of him who falls,
Nor for him sweet forgiveness earn.

II

Why, 'mid the gloom of darkened room,
Ask God to bless and multiply,
When just without, where flowers bloom,
His smile is written on the sky?
On all the carpet of the hill,
On every leaf, on every tree
The Master's hands lift up to fill
The cup of joy for you and me.

III

Like sunshine from a cloudless sky
His blessings fall; look up and see
And catch the good that passeth by.
Good fortune is man's destiny.
God meant it so, ah long ago,
And if you fail to see the light
You grovel in the shadows low
Amid your own imagined night.



*"Where God's green lanes in sweet contentment
wait."*

DAYBREAK

THE sensuous night has spun her web of dreams.
Aslant the east a sickle moon shines dim
Through leaves be-drenched with dew drops to the
brim.

Lo! every ingle with rich perfume teems.
It is the hush that comes before the dawn,
That pent-up stillness which the langorous night
Has brewed before the shadows take their flight:
The bended bow unto the arrow drawn.

Here every tree, robed in its new-grown leaves,
Bends heavy with the freighted weight of Spring.
Long sinuous vines in reckless embrace cling
And wave, as touched, by every wanton breeze.
The wildwood poppies redden'g in the glow
Of virgin blushes, bend their heads in sleep,
As down their stems the crystal dew drops creep:
Night's darkest hour treads stealthily and slow.

Behold, a spear of gold upon the gray
Of yonder sky! first messenger of light,
Touching the sleepy eye-lids of the night;
The harbinger of fast approaching day.
Listen the note, from out yon valley deep,
A clarion call, as clear and sharp and shrill
As Peter heard, the waking woodways fill;
The end of dreams, of silence and of sleep.

I hear the waking of the myriad things
That in the wood's seclusion softly dwell,
The busy tenants of this perfumed dell;
The droning bee — the softened whirr of wings.
Then lo! a song from thrush's clear-toned throat
Wakes all the silence of these arches dim —
The very daybreak's consecrated hymn,
Whose echoes through the morning twilight float.

Then through the cloistered aisles the white stars pale
Before the lordly march of coming day.
The sickle moon, undone, now fades away,
And gold-tipped clouds across her vision sail.
In every tree some unseen choir awakes,
A very symphony of lute and lyre;
A thousand dew-drops glisten with the fire
The Master kindles when the daylight breaks.

And after all this prelude to the day,
Its music soft as unseen flutes of Spring,
The flit and whirr of joy-engrossing wing,
Too happy in one favored spot to stay,
But from each tree some new-found joy partakes;
And when the Master's hand the picture shows
In colors rare, and from each dew-wet flower
New perfume consecrates this magic hour,
And joy-wrought splendor in each tree top glows —
Lo! after all this glory, weary man awakes.

.

They tell the story of a weary child,
Whose feet, accustomed to the city street,
Had never seen the tangled daisies wild,
Nor ever trod where field and woodland meet;
Who, when she saw this simple glory, smiled
And asked if all of Heaven was so complete.

And yet, men rich in all this worldly store,
Live pauper-like upon the stony street.
Their coffers filled, they quickly seek for more,
Loving the mart, where show and pretense meet;
They never pass the city's outer gate
Where God's green lanes in sweet contentment wait.



"Your thin, white lips my soul could understand."

GOOD-BYE

TIME has no pity; his a stony heart;
He laughs at sorrow, and at those who cry
He scoffs; the grief of those who part
Is meaningless to him: no tears have touched his eye.

We stood alone; the quiver of your hand
Was eloquence the tongue could not express.
Your thin, white lips my soul could understand:
Our grief spoke only in a soft caress.

Alas, good-bye; what phantoms seem to rise
Between the widening distances and you!
How yet I see the tear-stains in your eyes,
And feel your farewell parting looks anew!

We part: good-bye: who has a heart to feel
The simple pity which the words convey —
Ah, he has felt the sharpness of the steel
Which haply never comes to those who stay!



*"Human tears . . . on crimson cheek by
Sorrow pressed."*

REPENTANCE

TEARS which arise from soft, repentant eyes
Go up to God with more of grace
Than those which fall from stolid face
Of him who never cries.

Who has not tasted sin's supreme regret,
Who has not fallen by the way,
Can never know what gladness may
Await 'ere sun has set.

To find relief from galling prison yoke,
To feel the joy of pardoned sin,
One must have calmly entered in
The prison, then awoke

To find that slender silken cords may bind
The hands of him who lifts the cup
And saps his precious freedom up,
Forging the chains unkind.

Who laughs o'er sparkle of the tempting wine,
Who sins must pay the price of sin,
Must yield the penalty, and then
Alone in silence pine.

And yet I know all human tears yet seen
On crimson cheeks by Sorrow pressed,
None have the Master better blessed
Than those of Magdalene.



“ There lies the town — below the famous hill.”

GETTYSBURG

I

THERE lies the town, below the famous hill,
Ancient and careworn, sleepy and content;
Her moss-grown roofs the distant pictures fill
Where War and Carnage once in terror went.

On yonder ridge, crowned by an ancient spire,
The school of God in modest grandeur stands,
Whence many a youth, with heart and soul afire,
Went forth to preach in many fettered lands.

Quaint village of this unobtrusive plain
Wrapped in the even tenor of content,
I wonder why, without desire or vain,
Grim War should choose thee for her monument?

When Age of Peace upon the world looks down
And War has told her last sad bloody page,
Like Waterloo yon village will be crowned
And live in story of each poet-sage.

And men will bring their children here to see
This strange, sad spot, where sixty-hundred souls
Of valor sleep; then show yon aged tree
Which still the marks of awful carnage holds.



Here will they tell how men in olden time
Fought savage-like to right a fancied wrong,
Before the age when war was judged a crime:
Here Universal Peace will sing her song.

II

The summer tide had reached maturity;
The meadow-ways were full of wild, sweet things;
Broad fields of wheat bent like a breeze-swept sea;
Each hedge was noisy with the whirr of wings.

The god of War brought up his armies twain;
Their cumbered hosts trod down the bearded wheat;
Fair Summer fields were covered with the stain
Of trampled blooms, beneath the army's feet.

Along the ridge where sacred learning dwelt,
The host in gray took up its night's abode;
While far across the Southern wooded belt
The tents of blue in brave defiance showed.

And so they slept, a night of troubled dreams,
Before the day of carnage, pain and death:
The silent moon shed soft its silver beams,
The South-wind cooled them with its perfumed
breath.

But in the far-off homes, where loved ones slept,
Unbidden tear drops stained the pillowed face.
Somehow a dread through all their slumber crept;
Unrest and Fear and Awe walked all apace.

And many a prayer went up to God that night
From trembling lips that ne'er would pray again:
Some saw wan faces in delirium's flight,
While others lived ahead to-morrow's pain.

At midnight all was still, save where the tread
Of sentinel was heard. The Summer night
Wore slowly on, as if in awful dread
To wake the coming of the morrow's light.

III

The wheat was ripening in the fields; the blossoms
dreamed along the way;

Then sun was shining as of old o'er rifts of new
mown hay.

Down in the hollow, just below, where weeds and
grasses grew

The birds were singing, and a brook in freedom
rippled through.

That daisy and that clover should be wet with human
blood,

That wheat-fields should be swept away by force of
human flood,

Is more than heart can understand, or fertile mind
foresee:

The sound of death and sorrow drowning song of
bird and bee.

Sad eyes in old New England were turned toward
this day,

While down in Carolina homes sad forms bent low to
pray;

And lo, what more could steel the heart of each and
every man,

Than prayers of sweet-faced women through all our
sunny land?

In far-off homes were empty chairs and empty hearts
as well,
By hearthstones where the monsters, Fear and Dread,
unbidden dwell;
And long, dark lashes wet with tears, waiting alone
in pain —
Waiting in silence for the day of his return again.

What is it makes the soldier brave, what takes his
fear away,
When cannon shot and rifle ball make fierce the awful
fray?
It is not marshalled numbers of soldiers, men and
arms,
But image of some absent face the halting courage
charms.

So when the hosts of Blue and Gray marched out
with sabers high,
Each saw a face and fireside beneath another sky:
Saw not the danger as it hung above that awful field,
Forgot that Death walked near and made each heart
a heart of steel.

And thus they marched adown the hill and up the
farther side;
And though they fell in hundreds, and by hundreds
quickly died,
No fear of death was in their souls — they scoffed
at danger's face —
And fought as heroes every man, each in a hero's
place.

When after all the day was o'er, when smoke had
cleared away,
They slept in thousands, side by side, upon the
swarded clay,
Each with a hero's glory and with duty done so
well:
But, oh, the sorrow in the homes where soft-eyed
women dwell!

IV

The crisis in a nation's ill was passed;
Causes for which men fought were won and lost;
The die of fate upon the green was cast,
But who is there to count the untold cost?

The cost? Alas, small matter was it then
That auburn locks turned gray twixt dusk and light,
Or that brave souls, where Hope had always been,
Turned to a future of cimmerician night!

The broken heart, the shattered home, the grave —
The absent father, brother, sweetheart, friend:
These are the trophies which the battle gave —
These are thy gifts, O War! This is thy end.



THE CHILDREN OF MY DREAMS

I WISH you knew the children of my dreams,
The dainty little people wondrous fair,
Who come and go, as do the golden beams,
Of Autumn sunshine, slanting down the stair.

When hand of sleep has lifted from my brow,
And daylight crystals fill the morning air,
They come to me, so soft, I know not how,
So tender and so gentle and so fair.

The dusk of twilight never draws its gloom
About my hearth-stone, where the shadows play,
But these, my children, fill the sacred room
To wait my bidding at the close of day.

When Sleep is fickle in the dead of night
And silence broods its phantoms everywhere,
Their soft approach bids tedium take his flight:
The darkness has no gloom when they are near.

THE COAST OF DESTINY

Ho! sailor of the treacherous seas, what port is in
thine eye?

Some friendly shore thy vision sees beneath a sun-
lit sky;

The softest wind thy canvas fills and holds thy pen-
nant true —

But watch for storms from off the main these peace-
ful waters brew.

How many craft have left the shores with winds like
these to-day,

And passed the capes of Thithermore, which bound
the outer bay!

Then through the years, as men grow old and women
wait and weep,

No story of their fate comes back from off the faith-
less deep!

Ah, craftsmen all, we spread the sail abreast the soft-
est breeze,

And steer across the unmarked trail of fable-haunted
seas.

Some steer toward the port of fame, some pleasure's
beckons see;

All reach one coast, despite their aim — the coast of
destiny.

THE FRUITLESS DAY

I'VE gleaned to-day, O Master, in a barren field!
The scanty sheaves I bring are few and small;
I've swept the stubble, but the meager yield
Is such I blush to offer it at all.

Yet from the hour the lark was on the wing
I followed where the reapers led the way;
Still all my work no precious wheat would bring:
Heart-broken now, I weep at close of day.

Though, Master mine, the faulty sheaves are few,
Poor gift to please thy over-bounteous store,
Know that the fields no better wheat would strew,
Though with my toil I prayed to bring thee more.

THE OLD PALMETTO STATE

THERE is a look of wistfulness within thy tear-
stained eyes,
There is a touch of tenderness, of love and memories;
A reverie of flying years, fruitful, that would not
wait
Upon the beauty of thy face, dear old Palmetto
State.

Thy sons are scattered far and wide, here and be-
yond the sea,
But in each exiled heart is found true loyalty to thee;
And if to-day thy Mother-voice should reach them
where they dwell,
Each soul would quickly heed the call to do thy bid-
ding well.

They would not pause to question why their loyalty
was sought;
They would not stop to ask what price their services
had bought.
To know that Carolina called would stir the old-
time flame
In every soul and bring them back to win for her new
fame.

A look of tender wistfulness, alas! is in thine eyes;
A look of sated triumph brightens all thy memories.
Thy past, a way of glory, tried oft by flame and
fate,
And fills the hearts of all thy sons, dear old Pal-
metto State.

We never question what thy call, seems it for right
or wrong;
We only see thee by thy past and know that love is
strong —
So strong that every son of thine, be rich or poor his
fate,
Stands ready with his life to serve the old Palmetto
State.

There is a look of wistfulness within thy tear-stained
eyes —
There's reverie and tenderness, as one who softly
cries;
And well it is, for year by year, they come from near
and far
To sleep the endless sleep in peace where all thy
glories are.

DAISIES

THE legends tell,
When angels fell,
One, Myrra, with a heart of gold,
Down from her place of royal birth
Fell to the common ways of earth
And was entombed within its mould.

In later age,
On legend's page
The story of the flowers is told —
How from the spot where Myrra slept
A white-rimmed, smiling daisy crept,
And blossomed with an angel's soul.

And so to-day,
In fields of May,
The daisies bloom and smile and die;
Each with its face of white and gold
Content its mother-heart to hold,
To live and love beneath God's sky.

And so, my child,
In meadows wild
You see the daisies everywhere;
But ne'er a look of discontent
You find among these blossoms lent
From Myrra's soul, whose smile they wear.



*"While she who left a mother's arms to find the
ways of sin."*

THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

ALONG the road to Bethlehem they saw a star where
Christ was born;
They walked with gladness in their hearts this first
gray Christmas morn:
The perfumed breezes swept the plains, beneath the
soft Judean sky;
An angel whispered in their souls, "The reign of
peace draws nigh."

The rustle of the olive leaves, a flight of birds against
the blue,
The sparkle of the stunted grass all wet with tropic
dew,
And smile of blossoms by the way, the sound of
voices dim,
Each shared the joy of those who went the road to
Bethlehem.

Since on the plains of Palestine, far in the long ago,
The Christ-child woke to cheer the world it always
has been so;
For hearts that seem the sorest pressed to God are
closer drawn,
And hope awakens in the soul at light of Christmas
dawn.

The prodigal in alien land stops now to ponder o'er
The road of sin he long has trod, with heart and feet
a-sore;
While she who left a mother's arms, to find the ways
of sin,
Now pauses at the Christmas dawn to let the good
Christ in.

A sense of gladness always greets thy coming,
Christmastide.
Along the road to Bethlehem good will and peace
abide —
Somehow the old world's troubles seem to drift and
float away,
And every poor heart gladdens at the dawn of
Christmas day.

IN THY FAR HOME

No heart-aches come to that fair border-land
Where thou hast anchored now these many years.
No un-wrought tasks await thy toil-worn hand,
Thy eyes no longer know the stain of tears;
 But the eternal light of God's own day
 Illumines all thy way.

No Winter snow can reach thy safe abode,
Nor Winter storms disturb thy constant Spring.
God's flowers bloom along thy perfumed road;
Thou hast eternal wish and will to sing.
 Lo, thou art safe upon that far-off shore
 Where sin shall come no more.

The calm, blue skies of Paradise now bend
Above the roadway of thy blessed feet.
There is a warmth and perfume in the wind
Where gladness and thy sunny laughter meet;
 Thy fate is safe, thy face forever fair,
 No frowns can enter there.

I look beyond the falling of the rain,
I look beyond the autumn fields of gray;
I would forget the human touch of pain,
Beyond December see the fields of May:
 Await for me, within thy world of June,
 My coming will be soon.



*"The rare June days . . . were like a far-off
land to him."*

HE MISSED THE GLORY OF THE FIELDS

I

AT sixty years his fingers turned the rudest things
to gold,
Because his very life itself to Mammon had been
sold.
He loved the glitter of the coin, which in his coffers
fell,
And through the tardy years he served his heartless
master well.

II

His feet, adept in ways of trade, ne'er touched the
perfumed sod;
His ear, attuned to clinking gold, ne'er heard the
voice of God:
The beauty of the sun-set, and the sacred twilight
dim,
And the glory of the starlight were strangers all to
him.

III

The rare June days, when brown thrush sung to wel-
come coming day,
And bob white whistled to its mate amid the new-
mown hay —
The purple glory of the hills, where daisies smiled
and swayed —
Were like forbidden land to him who walked the
ways of trade.

IV

The wild, sweet things that bloomed beside the slowly
 creeping stream,
 The blessed silence of the woods where Nature lovers
 dream,
 And all the grass upon the slope, the cloistered
 Dryad shade,
 Were strangers to his busy feet who walked the ways
 of trade.

V

But lo! one day the Master called; 'twas hard for
 him to go,
 Because the shining gold was his, and then he loved
 it so.
 Alas! he missed the glory of the fields, the sun, the
 sky.
 "A wasted life": the angel wrote his record with a
 sigh.

THE ROSE OF CHRISTMAS DAWN

THE tropic twilight passed from out the West,
Leaving above the soft Judean plain
A mystic stillness of expectant rest
And to each toiling soul surcease from pain.

The shepherds by their sleeping flocks could see
New stars aglow, strange to their simple eyes;
The sailors on the far-off, misty sea
Awoke to mark new wonders in the skies.

A faintest breeze across the dusty plain
Set olive leaves a-quiver in their glee
Of some strange gladness, while a softened strain
Of distant music thrilled each sacred tree.

Then in the East, behind those rugged hills,
As if a curtain from the night was drawn,
Slowly as music, that some glad heart thrills,
There bloomed for all the Rose of Christmas
Dawn.

That same glad light which fills a human soul
Where sin so long has held his crimson sway,
When Christ comes in, new tenancy to hold,
And guide the feet through erst bedarkened way,

Is but the light, which in the long ago,
Shone with such splendor from Judean sky —
Is but the warmth, with all its rapturous glow,
That dries the tear from each repentant eye.

HAS GONE THE SILENT WAY

YON moon looks down on you and I,
And then for one in vain:
Once three of us were passing by
But now she sees but twain.

Alas! from out some sad-robed night,
When busy day is done,
The moon will cast her mellow light
This way and find but one.

And after some fair Junes have passed
The moon will look this way,
Of three who walked, behold, the last
Has gone the silent way.

THEN AND NOW

A country boy, barefooted, poor, alone,
Looked far across the Summer's golden day
Towards the city's pompous, busy way
Where wealth and splendor shone.
But he was poor, and every fierce desire
Was hushed.—And yet yon curling smoke
Within his soul Ambition's dream awoke
To set his heart afire.

The glad years sped; Ambition had her way:
The busy street gave him her wealth; and Fame
Showed him the heights, and there his shining name,
Written in gold, to live beyond his day.
But with it all the vale of childhood's joy,
The fragrant hills, the waving fields of June,
Were ever with him, whistling some old tune;
Somehow he longed once more to be a boy.

A SONG OF COURAGE

WHO keeps the threshold of his heart
Clean from the tracks of sin,
Is hero more than those who win
In warfare's ancient art,
And God, who weaves the gifts for men,
Will weave for him a double part.



"The longest day the blessed Summer knows."

TO THE MOCKING BIRD

TEACH me, O bird, the marvel of your song!
Teach me the secret of the joy you feel —
How your glad life flows like a rhythm along.
No cause for toil — in prayer you never kneel —
 But all the while you laugh and sing and praise
 Through Summer's matchless days.

Where hides the fount from which your gladness
 springs,
And whence the creed from which you garner joy?
No burdens yet have touched your tireless wings;
No length of seasons can your pleasures cloy.
 For each new day is all too short for you
 Song's raptures to pursue.

My mystery, from childhood, you have been —
To me you keep a secret yet untold.
With prattling joy you mock the toil of men —
The unknown springs of life you seem to hold;
 Deep in your heart the founts of bliss abound
 Which man has never found.

II

Joy haunts your sleep: the breaking of the day
Is all too slow. And when the East is red
Upon the top-most tree you tune your lay,
In music's softest string, ere night has fled.
 Then as the sunbeams light and gladness bring,
 You laugh and sing and sing.

The longest day the blessed Summer knows
Is all too short in which to sing your song;
So when the twilight in the far West glows,
Where painted clouds float lazily along,
 You even then sing on, bereft of light,
 Far in the silent night.

And sometimes when grim worry steals my sleep,
And leaves me restless in the lonely night,
Your flute-spent notes upon the stillness creep,
And turn my waking to a world of light;
 For sleep cannot, with all the dreams it brings,
 Silence the soul that sings.

III

Men toil and spin. They sin and weep and sigh,
Then speed the hours to welcome deadening sleep:
But you, sweet bird, laugh with the sunny sky
And feast on joy. You have no time to weep,
 Nor heart for sin — no needless wasting sighs —
 Beneath June's golden skies.

If man could learn half your philosophy
And measure to your simple, godly creed,
His life a golden road of joy would be,
And for the beads of penance have less need:
 Who sings the fleeting hours of time away
 Has little need to pray.

IT MATTERS NOT HOW DEEP THE VAL- LEY LIES

It matters not how deep the valley lies
Below the shaded gloom of mountain side;
It still will have the light of clear blue skies,
If Love himself there with me shall abide.

Ambition's heights — the shining way of gold —
Would to my journey give but scanty fare,
If some faint beckon did not promise hold
That Love, himself, content was dwelling there.

WHERE LOVE HAD BEEN

I WALKED the way where Love had been,
Where look to look in silence spoke:
I felt a sense of awe, as when
Love's touch my sleeping soul awoke.

I walked the road where Love had trod;
A sense of perfume filled the air
Like saintly incense up to God,
Because He, too, was dwelling there.

I walked the road where Love had dwelt
And lo! I could not half divine
The reason for the joy I felt
Until I saw this path was thine.



“Willow, my Willow! thy faithful vigil keep.”

THE WILLOW

AH! Willow, my Willow, with graceful limbs that
swing
Willing at touch of every passing breeze,
Holding the secret of hearts that cannot sing —
Willow, my Willow! priest to all the trees.

In one sweet valley, far away there lies
A sunken mound, beneath whose sod she sleeps,
Dreaming, perchance, of other summer skies,
While, Willow, my Willow, his faithful vigil
keeps.

How she did love the daisied sward, where grew
The primrose and the buttercup, while I
Forgot the beauty of the fields and knew
Only Love's message in her wistful eye.

Willow, my Willow! thy faithful vigil keep
Where now she sleeps beneath the summer sheen.
Thy every leaf, with me, shall learn to weep,
And we, together, keep her memory green.

BESIDE THE CONGAREE

SOMEHOW to-night old longings fill
The saddened heart that burdens me,
While pictured glories softly thrill,
As down the wistful past I see
 A cottage in the meadows, still,
 Beside the Congaree.

I lift the veil that falls between
The now and then, and clearly see
The boy who romped upon the green
Of swarded hill that used to be
 His outer world, from which was seen
 His wondrous Congaree.

And others in this kingdom small
Peopled its ways, content and free.
Mother! But oh! I dare not call
The names which memory shows to me.
 I weep and see the shadows fall
 Where flows the Congaree!

Out from the cottage, nestling there,
I sent my ships upon the sea,
And on the hill, when June was fair,
I spun my dreams of destiny.
 The ships are on the sea, somewhere,
 Beyond the Congaree.

To-night I know the moon-beams fall
Upon the hill — upon the lea.
I almost hear the night birds call
Unto their mates; once more I see
 The phantom pines, so gaunt and tall,
 Beside the Congaree.

Fate may divorce me of my gold,
May keep my ships upon the sea —
But memory better things can hold,
And these are mine: by destiny
 To feel youth's golden dreams unfold
 Beside the Congaree.

Long as the rose shall seek the sun,
So long as gulls shall love the sea,
So shall my tender longings run
Where flows the willowed Congaree;
 Where dreams of untried days were spun
 Beside the Congaree.

TO-DAY I'VE TOILED LONG

TO-DAY I've toiled long, O Master Fate!
My feet are weary and my hands are sore.
The day crept slowly, now the hour is late,
And yet my hopes are far away from shore.

Hast thou no heart of pity, Master mine,
To feel the heart-ache of thy helpless child?
Why give me gall for drink instead of wine?
Why lead me where the way is rough and wild

When thou hast roads of plenteous content,
Where tree and vine their splendors entwine —
The pathway where thy favored children went?
May I not walk therein, O Master mine?

THE WRECK

DOWN by the beach, where salt waves go,
Amid tall grass, the even flow
Of ebbing tide comes slow, so slow!
And from the marsh tall lilies rise
Upward, as if to reach the skies,
With pleading of wistful human eyes.

Against the sands, sea-foul'd and bent,
A wreck reposes in content,
Here by the tireless sea-god sent.
Of life her decks are bare and free;
The ship has reached her destiny:
A helpless waif beside the sea.

THE FACE WHICH MEMORY SEES

WHEN the twilight shadows darken, 'ere the day has
gone to sleep,
There comes a tryst for dreaming which memory
loves to keep,
When all is lost in silence and the daylight discord
flees
As before us there is lifted the face which memory
sees.

For you it may be a mother's face, who passed in the
long ago,
Or that of your child which God has called because
He loved it so.
It matters not who went away, this much the dead
past leaves:
There comes to all, when day is done, the face which
memory sees.

Alas! how the thin lips tremble for kisses which come
no more,
And silently someone listens for a voice from a dis-
tant shore.
A tear which falls unbidden, in the dusk where some
one grieves,
Is brushed away when cometh the face which memory
sees.

“ Who loveth best is bravest, there’s heart for any
fate,”
And courage comes to patient souls who in the valley
wait;
And somehow empty hearts are filled, old sorrow
softly flees,
As twilight lifts before us the face which memory
sees.

THE UNRETURNING

THE unreturning, where, Oh, where are they,
These long, sad years, since first they went away?
Our locks, then auburn, now have turned to gray.

The unreturning, where are they so long?
Ah, they must dwell among some happy throng,
And are entranced by magic siren song —

Else they would know how stony is the way,
And how the sky is flecked with clouds of gray,
Through all the years since first they went away.

THE SOUND OF SUMTER'S GUN

I

THE glorious Spring was waking into bloom
Where flowed the rivers to the waiting sea.
The meadows, smiling, from the Winter's gloom,
Wore green and gold, and every faithful tree
Was half a-leaf; while Carolina teemed
With waking life. Once more she lived and
dreamed.

II

There was a sound of muffled discontent
That sent a dart to every soul that heard
Its echo in the hills. 'Twas Sumter's challenge sent
To all the world, which waiting nations feared:
The bravest deed by any people done,
That muffled sound, the boom of Sumter's gun.

III

Its clarion call swept far across the bay,
And lost its echo on the salty main.
It marked for us, alas! a fateful day,
And filled a million trembling hearts with pain.
No longer could a restless people shun
The war proclaimed by Sumter's sullen gun.

IV

Across the marshes, silent, green and still,
 The echoes sounded like the pall of doom,
 Waking the marsh hen with a sudden thrill —
 Breaking the live oak's solitude and gloom:
 In far lagoons, where silence revel holds
 The bell of fate a nation's sorrow tolls.

V

The echoes rent the fair Savannah's vale,
 And sounded o'er the Alabama hills;
 Through old Virginia, with her memories pale,
 It touched the bravest heart with sudden thrills:
 From proud Potomac to the Rio Grande
 The gun of Sumter waked a sleeping land.

VI

Alas! the jasmine closed its yellow cup,
 And children faltered in their happy play.
 The daisies in the meadow, looking up,
 Bent low their heads upon that April day.
 Through all the South the laggard breezes crept
 And happy birds refused to sing and wept.

VII

In every home there was a silent pall —
 Men looked into the eyes of wife and child;
 A something in the throat — ah! worse than gall;
 A tear-stain showed where joy anon had smiled.
 By every hearth in all our sunny land
 The heavy heart now trembled in the hand.

VIII

Upon the years that followed draw the veil,
 Upon the anguish and the homes of woe —
 The soldiers valor and the lips so pale,
 The lagging years that crept along so slow!
 Ah! how could souls inhuman burdens bear
 And not surrender to the God Despair!

IX

Come close, my child; hear but the simple tale
 Of valor which the gun of Sumter drew;
 How thy brave fathers walked through sorrow's vale
 A hero each, to duty's bidding true.
 When History writes the story of their deed
 She'll find that each was faithful to his creed.

X

Ye Pens, which wrote of fabled Spartan deeds
 Or told the tale of Waterloo so well,
 Know that the hand of Justice with you pleads
 The story of our valor yet to tell.
 Upon the page of history is a pause
 Where ye shall write the story of our cause.



"Thou faithful oak still fanned by marsh swept breeze."

TO LANIER'S OAK

The live oak at Brunswick, Ga., under which Sidney Lanier wrote the "Marshes of Glynn."

THOU faithful oak! still fanned by marsh-swept
breeze,

Which cooled his brow, whose heavenward-lifted
gaze

Saw all the beauty and the comradeship of trees:

Keep green his memory, sing each day his praise.

You look upon the pictured marshes there,

That stretch away toward the murm'ring tide;

The waving grasses are as green and fair,

As when he watched them seated at your side.

You hear the marsh hen's call, you hear the roar

Of tides which break upon the outer bar.

You feel the scented breeze, swept from his fabled
shore,

And see the gleam that trembled in his star.

To you was known the longing of his soul,

His love of marsh, of birds, the sea and trees.

His whispered words of tenderness you hold;

You keep the secret of his garnered sheaves.

What pictures from your welcome shade, serene,
Rose up before his poet's flashing eye!
What golden splendors lifted there between
His faithful marsh and star be-gloried sky!
Methinks that in your shade some spirit stood
And touched his pen with her immortal hand,
As there he wrote the glory of the wood,
Of sea and marsh, of sunlight on the sand.

TO-MORROW AND TO-DAY

No songs shall echo down the silent way;
Death's finger rests the lips that once were gay:
So let us sing the little while we may.

There are no smiles where sleep the pensive eyes
Beneath the vault of Shade's eternal skies.
Who would not smile before the present flies!

No soft caress, nor tender good-night kiss
Will ever break oblivion's dark abyss:
So garner here what there the soul will miss.

JOHN CHARLES McNEILL

Died October 17, 1907

LIKE prophet singer from some fabled shore,
Where bluest skies bend o'er,
He came and strewed our pathway all along
With fadeless blooms of song.

Where Memory keeps her garden of delight,
Away from human sight,
We love him as the things he loved so well
Which in the meadows dwell.

The dear years beckoned; life to him was sweet,
His cup of joy complete;
But when Death called, he went without a sigh,
Nor asked the reason why.

God's shy sweet things, which bless yon distant hill
And all the valleys fill,
Within their hearts of rare, untarnished gold
His cherished memory hold;

And in the woods, where silent dryads keep
Their watch and never sleep,
Sad reed-notes through the blessed Summer play,
Since last he went away.

And rich October, with her colors rare
And tufted hedges fair,
Passes along, without her wonted pride,
Thinking of when he died.



"The lights of home which in the window glow."

WHERE SOMEONE WAITS AT HOME

I

THE day is done. The crimson lights of sin
Illumes the city's splendor here and there;
A tremor of unrest pervades the misty air
Of man-made day, which twilight ushers in.

II

Look far beyond these lights, my child, and see
The lights of home which in the windows glow.
These, watched by tender eyes which love you so,
Are beacons calling from a siren sea.

MISTLETOE

YOU seem like some immortal thing,
So gentle, yet so bold,
As to the yeoman oak you cling
Amid the Winter's cold.

You bring the mists of other years
To memory's sight once more —
The yuletide, with its smiles and tears,
From Youth's enchanted shore.

For underneath your magic green,
At foot of childhood's stair,
I see the smile that crowned her queen,
Then kissed her golden hair.



*"The picture of a fallen gate and one who needs
must wait."*

THE GATE

SOFT echoes from the temple bells,
The picture of a fallen gate,
And one who needs must wait
Where sad-faced Memory dwells.

She stood inside its topmost bar,
I stood beneath the pine tree shade,
While lutes of twilight played
For her and evening star.

Two roads diverging far apart,
Our fragil craft wrecked on the sea :
Love's memory left for me
This gate and broken heart.

I CANNOT TELL

I CANNOT tell how fair the valleys seem
Which greet your eye upon that far-off shore ;
Nor what sweet blooms along the roadway dream
Where you shall find repose forevermore —
How soft the twilight falls at close of day
Upon your peaceful way.

But this I know, that all the fields are gray ;
The rose and rue both blossom with regret,
And thoughtful pines sob since you went away :
Alas, for me one star of hope is set !
Listening, I stand where lengthening shadows fall,
Waiting the Master's call.



"Between the hills the meadow sleeps."

IN BOB-WHITE DAYS

BETWEEN the hills the meadow sleeps;
Upon the hill the wheatfields lie
Beneath the bluest summer sky,
While just beyond the river creeps;
Time all his debts of Winter pays
In these rare bob-white days.

The hours are long, but bird and bee
Are busy till the twilight glow,
And even then reluctant go
To nest and hive in yonder tree:
An image of old Eden strays
Around in bob-white days.

Upon the upland where the hedge
Slips down between the corn and wheat,
There every blossom is complete,
For summer always keeps her pledge:
Now every breeze new joy conveys
In golden bob-white days.

Within the city's showy street
Men toil beneath a heavy load,
With want and envy as a goad,
Toiling where greed and pretense meet:
They never hear the lute that plays
Out here in bob-white days.

THE LAND OF MEMORIES

I—THERE LIES THE SOUTH

THERE lies the South of soul-kept memories,
The land of dreams and lotus-scented vales,
Above whose plains bend low the fairest skies —
Along whose coasts the craft of Romance sails —
Where every breeze that sweeps each sunny plain
Brings dreams of youth again.

Who once has slept beneath this sensuous sky,
Who once has dreamed where dark magnolias grow,
Feeling the spell, will never question why
The South thus lulls and charms the stranger so.
Here every night that folds him in its arms
Weaves 'round his soul new charms.

Somehow the sunshine has a keener ray,
Somehow the night's more subtle than elsewhere;
One loves the langour of this perfumed way,
As well the tresses of her tangled hair:
For even Love a double incense brews
Amid these crystal dew.

This is the land of dark-lashed, dreamy eyes;
Where warming sun makes doubly warm the heart;
Lips doubly red, because from cloudless skies
God's tropic warmth plays well the painter's art:
Here all the grace of Eve's fair daughters meet
In beauty's crown complete.

II — MEETING OF MARSH AND SEA.

Down in the wave-swept marshes grows the sea-tall
meadow grass,
Lover of moistened winds that brew along the tossing
main;
Lifting its blades in pleading to all the clouds that
pass —
Drinking the gift of all the tides and of the summer
rain.

Here rests afar the long, smooth beach that bounds
the guilty sea;
Here come the tides with even flow to kiss the
smooth white sand:
From seaward lilts the moaning of soul-sad min-
strelsy,
And mingles with the melody of birds from near-by
land.

Here meet the legends from the main and phantoms
from the sea,
The odors from the Isles of Hope where argosies
await;
The shore, the marsh, the grasses tall are patient
ever-more,
While mystery of sea and land guard well this magic
gate.

III — THE LIVE OAKS.

Back from the marshes like a frame the low, green
live oaks stand,
Stretching their arms like maidens fair towards the
sullen deep;
And kissing each lazy breeze that sweeps their
tresses from the land,
Pleading return of some lost soul, whose memory still
they keep.
Through sullen years their patience waits, watching
the shipless seas —
Braving the rains and cloud and mist, the golden sun
between —
Chanting alike, in sun and shade, their low, mysteri-
ous pleas,
But keeping afresh, through tireless years, that long-
lost memory green.

IV — SINGING PINES.

Skirting the line where marsh and upland meet
The sombre pines, like marshalled army, stand;
Looking across the meadows at their feet,
They wave to sea the good-will of the land —
And smile upon the live oaks far away
Through all the lazy day.

Through lofty tops of green the west winds play
With unseen fingers in low undertone.
In all the stillness of the long, sweet day
There comes this dirge, like sin-imprisoned moan
Of long-lost souls, from out yon misty deep —
Come here to wail and weep.

About this wooded gloom the dogwoods grow,
And here the Christmas holly hangs its green.
Here, too, the hawthorn weaves its plumes of snow,
While jasmine festoons with its wreaths between:
The odorous silence of this twilight shade
Within the woodland laid.

This is the mystic home of mystic things.
Here shadowy forms float through the perfumed air,
There is a whirr of strange, uncanny wings;
Shadows and phantoms at each other stare:
And unseen flutes chant high among the trees
The song of one who grieves.



"On memory's wings the hawthorn clings."

UNDER THE HAWTHORN TREE

IN childhood's days the woodland ways
No dearer sight to me could show,
Than when, through mists of April days,
The hawthorn waved its arms of snow.

To upturned eyes the April skies
Were pale, as seen through green and white:
Joy filled the soul with youth's surprise
At wealth of bloom within a night.

On memory's wings the hawthorn clings,
For in its shade her smiling eyes
Bade Love come down and fold his wings
And consecrate my Paradise.

Of all sweet things the springtime brings,
As memory haunts the past for me,
I love the thought of her that clings
About the snowy hawthorn tree.

THE LAST GOOD-NIGHT

SOME years ago a local Western paper published the story of a young business man's death under pathetic circumstances. The same thing happens almost every day, but the world takes little heed and the incidents pass, yet we never think of, or know, the sorrow that enshrouds each.

In the above case a pathetic letter from the young man to his wife was left which tells the story. He had struggled for years with one besetting sin, and unable to conquer it, he preferred death to living defeat and disgrace. The letter follows:

"My dear Wife: — The struggle has been long and bitter, but to-night it has its ending. For years I have tried, as you know, to conquer the crave for drink, but all effort seems in vain. It is hard to go, you cannot know *how* hard, but it is best for you and for our little Nell and before I make life harder for you both I will loose the golden cord.

Please never tell our darling the truth. She is too young to know how I died. Kiss her for me. It seems my love for you was not strong enough to redeem my lost power, but it gives me the courage to do this fatal deed that you both may be saved from further heart-aches.

Think of this when you find me cold in the morning — Good-night."

THE LAST GOOD-NIGHT

THE die is cast. The wretched deed is done.
With my sad heart, before the rising sun,
I have agreed to snuff the little light
They now call life — far better call it night.

II

I am no longer master of my soul;
I cannot stay the tides that o'er me roll.
Each step I take leads deeper in the gloom.
For me no more the summer rose will bloom.
My strength is far unequal to the fight;
So I shall cross the fatal stream to-night,
And see my boatman, with a face of shame,
Although I've prayed my error to reclaim.

III

A strange, sweet calm, now that I am agreed
To free this soul that long has learned to bleed,
Environs me, and I am brave to do
The deed that sends me to some Master new.
Only I dread that, in my waking hour,
I face some Master with a double power
Than he who ruled me for these many years,
And strewed my way with heart-aches and with tears.

IV

Ah! here's the picture of my little Nell!
 To-night I kissed her and the brown hair fell
 Across my hands, so tremulous and white.
 Dear God, I'm glad she noticed not my fright.
 How she will cry, when in to-morrow's dawn
 She comes to kiss the lips then coldly drawn
 In Death's long sleep: and how she will caress
 These thin, white hands, alas! too cold to bless.

V

Here from the wall her mother's face looks down,
 Her silver hair all tangled with the brown;
 And every line, which time has written there,
 My sinning traced and aged her brow so fair.
 For you, dear heart, this sorrow now is passed,
 Save this the final and the bitter last.
 To-morrow you will walk about this room
 Where I am dead, amid its awful gloom,
 And then awake, to look at life again,
 With all its shades and unrelenting pain.

VI

How dear the things about this chamber seem!
 How memories about the windows teem,
 Whence I have looked upon a world of light
 Out of my prison heart of gloom and night!
 She hung these simple pictures on the wall
 With her dear hands; and where the shadows fall,
 Upon the table, with its spread of white,
 She always came to pray with me at night.
 Ah, Fate! and must I go to leave it all,
 And face a world where heartless demons call?

VII

Was that a tear which on the table fell
 Just when I thought of sleeping little Nell?
 Was that her face I saw across the room
 Looking so pale in all its mantled gloom?
 Come, Soul, though weak in all my mortal fight,
 You must not fail me in my plans to-night!

VIII

Yes, it is best; the bridges of regret
 I've burned and to the deed my cunning set.
 So let me ready for the long, long sleep
 That other hearts have lesser cause to weep.

IX

Here is the cup that holds the fatal drink
 For those too sad and weary more to think.
 How small it is, and yet how great the deed
 When from a yoke the victim it has freed.

.

I rest me now upon this bed of ease:
 One drink and lo! the weary spirit flees.
 The pictures there are fading in the light.
 At last I rest. Dear wife, dear Nell, good-night.

MY SHIPS AT SEA

RICH freighted with the hopes of many years,
My tardy ships at sea.
I watch and wait and shed unbidden tears,
Lest they come not, these crafts of many cares;
Then bow to destiny.

Ah, precious cargoes, long upon the deep
By cruel fate delayed,
I see your sails amid my lighter sleep,
And o'er the main a lover's vigil keep,
Still waiting, unafraid.

Some day across the harbor's outer bar
Guarding the farther main —
Beyond the craft of others from afar —
I'll glimpse your sails beneath the evening star,
And greet you home again.

LEGEND OF THE WEST WINDS

AMONG the South Florida aborigines a legend is told which has slight foundation for truth, yet embodies a romantic interest that is worth preserving among the folk-lore myths of our early history.

The legend has come down through generations from the original Indian settlers, and recites that the sea was angry when the first Spanish ships sailed along the Florida coast, their presence being an intrusion upon Neptune's domain.

To destroy this intrusive fleet of gold seekers the sea brewed a terrible East wind, the violence of which sent three ships to the bottom, near the mouth of the Miami river. All on board were lost, and as a further punishment the souls of the adventurers were condemned to imprisonment in the damp swamps along the tropical Florida coast.

Within these swamps, the legend recites, phantoms in Spanish armor can be seen shifting from place to place and weird sounds are heard, resembling the call of the lost. It is further told that during certain seasons these phantoms walk along the beaches, on dark nights, calling to the sea for relief and a home-conveying ship; but the sea's only reply is a fierce East wind, to recall to the mind of the spirits again the storm which sent the Spanish ships to the bottom.

The story also relates that the gentle West winds of that section are piteous to these lost sailors, and try to soothe them with soft caresses; and so long as the West winds blow the phantoms are content to dwell among the gloom of the tropical swamps, where they chant weird, echo-like songs of their far-away land. In the following verses only the general outline of the old story has been observed:



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"Down where this lazy river flows."

CALL OF THE WEST WINDS

I

OUT of a land of cloudless skies —
A land where Romance never dies —
 The West winds, redolent and slow,
 Across the meadows blow.
And lo, from out the barren sod
A thousand prayers look up to God —
 A thousand tulips red and tall
 Have heard the West winds call.

Strange mystery conceals the space
Where West winds make their homing place;
 A land where Dreams and Elfs abide,
 Beyond some fabled, unseen tide
That sweeps the shores of Everywhere
Between the earth and outer air.
 Ah! West winds, redolent and slow,
 Across the waters blow.

Here where these weird Palmettos rise,
Like sentinels against the skies,
 The wildwood iris, slender, tall,
 Have heard the West winds call.
Within this cloistered church divine,
Where fluted morning glories shine,
 Strange lutes in far-off echoes play
 Through all the long, sweet day.



"Here, where these weird Palmettos rise."

Down where this lazy river flows
The marsh grass tall and slender grows;
 Upon its tide a frail canoe
 Sails phantom-like against the blue.
This argosy of hope and dreams
Through backward glance of memory beams.
 For one, now passed beyond the pale
 The sleepy West winds hail.

Where placid river meets the sea
This boat has reached its destiny.
 Though light and shadows come and go
 Sad hopes are in the undertow;
Nor all the glory of this plain
Can bring a long-lost smile again.
 The sea grass builds a guarding wall;
 One cannot hear the West winds call.

II

Within this tropic wood strange phantoms hide —
White, shadowy things beneath the palms abide;
 Weird, festooned vines bespan this dark abyss
 That never felt the outer sunlight's kiss,
And trees, whose tops exult in glorious light,
Grow from a sod wrapped in a dawnless night.
 Who treads within this 'biding place of gloom
 Intrudes, unasked, where lost hopes ever bloom.



"Shadowy things beneath the Palms abide."

Yon sea that sleeps with such becoming grace
Reveals no guilt upon its placid face.

Alas! it hides, within its cavernous deep
Full many a wreck, long peacefully asleep:
And in the shadow of these myriad trees
Abide the victims of the treacherous seas.
For them no sunbeams from the glad sky fall —
And yet they hear the blessed West winds call.

For in this shade, bereft of wholesome day,
The gentle sunbeams never find their way;
But long-lost sounds haunt all this mystic gloom,
Faint echoes from yon sea-encircled tomb.
Low, fluted sounds sweep all this dampened shade,
By unseen hands and hidden voices made.
Æolian harps, attuned in far-off lands,
Play soft and low, touched by mysterious hands.

The Sea God, jealous of his proud domain,
Guards well his rights to all the trackless main.
With storm and cloud, with rain and wave,
He sends intruders to their grave,
That he may watch, with sullen glee,
The picture of a shipless sea;
The stillness of the midnight gloom
But aids his victims to their doom.



"The stillness of the midnight gloom."

III

In distant age of chivalry —
 When men were hunting land and sea
 To find the fabled haunts of gold —
 One stormless eve, so we are told,
 The Sea God saw three ships afar
 Sailing towards the twilight star:
 Each sail was full of urging breeze —
 Hope filled each eye that scanned the seas.

From out the tropic Gulf, where lie
 His storms beneath a brazen sky,
 The Sea God called them each by name.
 With fearless speed each quickly came,
 And ere the night had passed away
 Three ships among the corals lay;
 And sailors all, who sought the shore,
 Now slept where Hope had closed the door.

IV

Along this shore, where sentinel Palms await
 And watch for ships that evermore are late —
 When night is dark and storms engulf the shore —
 Grim seamen from the Spanish wrecks of yore
 Walk stealthily along the shining sand,
 That here divides the billows from the land;
 And beckon eastward, pleading with the main
 For friendly ship to sail them home again.



"From far Antilles to tropic Yucatan."

The Sea God answers with his fiercer blasts
Of storm and wave. Upon the beach he casts
A crystal foam, the essence of his rage,
Like some fierce beast imprisoned in a cage.
Through gloom of night the ghostly phantoms plead
With heartless sea to listen to their need;
But not content with wreck and death and gloom,
The sea delights to point them to their doom.

“Remember well the day you sailed along
These placid waters with your seamen’s song,
As if the world, with all its bliss and gold,
Was yours, by simple rights, to have and hold.
From far Antilles to tropic Yucatan
I hold the right these waters to command,
And you, who stole upon my vast domain,
As hostages forever must remain.”

“Back to your wold,” again the Sea God cried;
“Back to the gloom where you shall hence abide.
Know that I rule with mist and rain and wind
These trackless waters till the ages end.
Until you sailed these mystic waters blue
No mortal soul my peerless kingdom knew.
Since you have sinned against my will’s decree
Suffer and wait your self-wrought destiny.”



"Within the gloom where Silence vigil keeps."

Thus spoke the Sea to those who plead in vain
For homing ships to sail once more to Spain.

Then calling to his winds, imprisoned there,
He gave them freedom of the outer air.

Lo! from the East the storm such torrents blew
That every tree, which on the beaches grew,
Crouched low to seek the shelter of the ground

And lose the terror of that ghostly sound,
Which landward came with unrebuked refrain,
Muffled with mist and unrelenting rain.

Swift as the clouds that speed across the sky
The frightened spirits to the woodlands fly.

Where dark miasma slowly lifts its trail

They float among the shadows wan and pale.
Within the gloom, where silence vigil keeps,
Come fluted moan, like one who, restless, sleeps. . .

Lo! then a breeze sweeps through the forest tall
The spirits hear the piteous West winds call.

Then peace as soft as that on yonder bay,
Which brews at close of cloudless summer day,
Fills all the realm of gloomy woodland wide

Where silence and the haunted souls abide.
For then the West winds guard the scented land,
And rule the sea-storms with a gentle hand;

And only when their mission calls them far
The gates of Neptune's wrath are left ajar.



“Then peace as soft as that on yonder bay.”

Behold the glory of this land of Spring,
Where happy birds through all the long days sing;
 Where moonlight floods the palm encircled bay
 When night has claimed the beauty of the day.
Each breeze that creeps across the marsh-green plain
Brings dreams of youth to halting age again.
 No wonder that the Spanish braves inclined
 The fount of youth upon these shores to find.



"Spring along the fair Savannah."

SPRING ALONG THE FAIR SAVANNAH

SPRING along the fair Savannah, when the robin
vaunts his red —
When the jasmine hangs its yellow on the willows
over-head —
Every wind that wakes your dreaming whispers some-
thing Love has said.

Spring along the fair Savannah, scented blooms each
other vie
With their festoons overhanging every spot to
glorify,
When a lark sends down a message from the match-
less Southern sky.

Spring along the fair Savannah, when the blue-bird
tunes his note,
And a symphony of gladness from some other hid-
den throat,
In the alders and the willows, like an anthem seems
to float.

Who has heard the South a-calling once will hear it
call again.
Who has seen the poppies blushing to an oriental
stain
And is exiled from its glory, feels an exile's keenest
pain.

THE PRODIGAL

THE husks of sin were bitter, and the road,
O'er which his wayward feet so long had trod,
Was set with stones that heavier made the load
Which sin imposed, since he forgot his God.

The thought of home set music in his soul;
The distant hills were calling his return;
The careless birds a father's waiting told,
And of the lights that in a window burn.

So when he left the crimson way of sin,
That long had wooed him to its prison lair,
Somehow the light of gladness entered in
Where long had dwelt the image of Despair.

MORNING

I

AURORA lifted high her golden arm
Out of the orient sea,
Wearing the smile of her eternal charm
Un-aged by destiny,
And freeing there her myriad beams of light
Thus sped them on their flight:

II

“Go, daylight messengers, go fast and far,
Even beneath yon peaceful, dreaming star.
Go to the West, where Darkness holds his sway,
And bid him open wide the gates of day.

“Go to the couch where sleeping beauty dreams
Of lover’s touch, and waken with your beams;
And at the door, where care-worn Sorrow waits,
Knock soft and open wide your golden gates.”

III

And every beam, fresh with To-morrow’s glow,
Whispered through smiles, “Mother of Light, we
go.”

IV

Through casement window of a darkened room
 They found a child, smiling its dreams of play.
 Silent they drove afar the curtained gloom —
 On sandalled feet let in the joy of day.

Where Sorrow waits, beside its speechless dead,
 A weary face looked up in sudden fright,
 Who dwelt alone with Grief and sullen Dread,
 Then sadly smiled a welcome to the light.

The gates of Crime were tightly locked and barred,
 Where feeble light gave out its sickly glare.
 Grim faces frowned and each was pale and scarred —
 The messengers found tardy welcome there.

Upon Ambition's brow the mark of Care
 Sat vigil-like, waiting the coming day.
 Their knock was answered with a welcome clear:
 Ambition rose to scale the higher way.

Where lustful Pleasure kept his couch of ease
 The midnight candle flickered low and dim.
 He heard the knock, as one unwelcome sees
 Intrusion's face, then beckons "go " to him.

V

Back from their tasks the messengers return;
 Aurora waits them there.
 In eyes of some the joys of gladness burn —
 In others mute despair.

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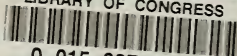
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